Increase in the telephone bills of Ministers

906. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PROMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a continuous increase in the telehone bills of the Ministers of the Central Government on their listed and unlisted telephones, during each of the last three years;

(b) if so, what are the details, viz. number of calls and amount of telephone bills of each Minister for the years 1991-92, 1992-93 and 1993-94 and upto June, 94;

(c) whether these bills were paid within the prescribed period if not, what are the reasons therefor;

(d) what are the names of ex-Ministers who were Ministers during the above period but after relinquishing their offices have not paid their bills so far; and

(e) what are the details of the calls and amount of the telephone bills outstanding against each of them during the period mentioned above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (e) Such information is not kept by the Telecom. Department. The detailed particulars are maintained by the respective Ministries.

Production achievements by telecommunication factories

907. SHRI V. RAJESWAR RAO:
SHRI SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the total production in terms of value achieved by the six telecommunication factories during the years 1992-93 and 1993-94.

(b) what was the target of production set for these respective years;

(c) whether any cost benefit analysis has been made about these factories in view of the policy of liberalisation;

(d) whether the private sector is being allowed to produce the items which are being produced in these factories and to what extent; and

(e) what are the production cost benefit in these factories vis-a-vis private sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Total production achieved in Telecom. Factories during 1992-93 was Rs. 135.24 Crores and during 1993-94 was Rs. 117.72 Crores.

(b) The production target for 1992-93 was Rs. 150 Crores and that for 1993-94 was Rs. 165 Crores.

(c) The main products of Telecom. Factories viz. CT Boxes, Microwave Towers, Tubes, Main Distribution Frames (MDF), DP Boxes, Local Pay Phones etc. are cost competitive with private suppliers. The production of items which have become obsolete due to technological advancement have been discontinued and new products viz., Tubular Towers/Masts, MDFs for medium and large Exchanges. Line Jack Units, Antennas, Connectors etc. have been included in the production programme for 1994-95 with a view to utilise the existing infrastructure and resources. Chief General Managers have been authorised to take up any DOT/non DOT product for manufacture and market them at competitive cost and quality. It is considered that Telecom Factories can be run as viable units even in the environment of liberalised policy.

(d) There is no bar on any private manufacturer to produce the items from the product range of Telecom. Factories. Generally the requirement in excess of the production capacity of Telecom. Factories is procured from outside sources.

(e) The major products of Telecom Factories compete favourably with those of private suppliers in respect of cost as well as quality.

Changes in the Telecom policy

908. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring azout amendments in the National Telecom Policy;

(b) if so, whether the telecom offences are increasing rapidly without any proper check; and

(c) if so, to what extent the changes in the telecom policy are going to check telecom offences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) There has been rapid increase in the complaints of diversion of telephones by unscruplous persons in connviance with the telecom officials for illegal STD|ISD purposes. As a preventive measure surprise inspections by Vigilance Staff of the Department have been strengthened at sensitive points in the network. 4 special Cell of CBI will be set up shortly at the 4 metropolitan cities to coordinate with the Department officials in effectively checking the malpractice. It is proposed to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 to effectively deal with the persons involved in diversion of telephones or those taking advantage of such diversion of those abetting or inducing such diversion. Deterrent penalties are being proposed against such persons. The Bill for this purpose has already been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 10.8.93. It is expected that the proposed legislation will enable the Department to effectively deal with and contain the malpractice of diversion of telephones for illegal purposes.

Euroissue of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited

909. SHRI G. Y. KRISHNAN:
SHRI O. P. KOHLI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are dithering on the decision to relaunch the $1 billion Euroissue of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (VSNL) and the loss per day to the VSNL is estimated to bs Rs. 1 crore;

(b if so, what is Government's present thinking to go to the international market again at the earliest; and

(c) how far the non-mobilisation of funds is impairing the programmes of the VSNL and also the growth of telecommunication sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir. The report of estimated loss of Rs. 1 crore per day is without any basis.

(b) No final decision has yet been taken regarding relaunch of the deferred VSNL issue.

(c) Deferment has not impaired the programmes of VSNL and the telecommunication sector.

टेलेक्स मशीनों पर देवनागरी का प्रयोग

910. श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या दूरसंचार विभाग में टेलेक्स मशीनों पर देवनागरी के प्रयोग की सुविधा उपलब्ध है;